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SEVENTH NUMBER

VERMONT ❧ ❧ ❧
❧ ❧ ILLUSTRATED



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DAUGHTERS OF VERMONT.

VERMONT ILLUSTRATED.

CHAPTER VI.—(*Continued.*)

THE BLOODY EDICT.—CONTINUED.

“9. And whereas the said county of Charlotte, hath but lately been set off from the said county of *Albany*, and there is yet no gaol or court-house erected within the same; and a great part of the said county being involved in a state of anarchy and confusion, by reason of the violent proceedings of the aforesaid riotous and disorderly people, from whence it must, at present, be extremely difficult, if not impracticable, to bring offenders to justice within the said county.

“*Be it therefore further enacted* by the authority aforesaid, That all treasons, felonies, crimes, misdemeanors and offences whatsoever, at any time heretofore committed or perpetrated, or hereafter to be committed or perpetrated within the said county of Charlotte, shall and may be proceeded against and presented by any grand jury for the county of Albany, from time to time, to be impannelled and sworn at any court of criminal jurisdiction to be held in and for the said county of Albany; who shall and may charge any of the said offences to have been committed in any part of the said county of Charlotte; and all indictments so found by them, shall be adjudged to be good and valid, notwithstanding that the place of perpetrating any of the said offences be in the said indictments alleged to be out of the said county of Albany; and all such offences and offenders which shall be presented or indicted as aforesaid, shall and may be tried within the county of Albany, and by a jury thereof, and there heard, determined and punished in the same manner and form as if such treason, felony, crime, misdemeanor or offence, had arisen and been perpetrated within the said county of Albany.

“10. (Provides that parties may try accused persons in Charlotte county, if they find they can safely do so).

"11. *And be it further enacted* by the authority aforesaid, That this act shall be publickly read in every court of general sessions of the peace, to be held in each of the said counties of Albany and Charlotte, respectively.

"12. *And be it further enacted* by the authority aforesaid, That this act shall remain and continue in full force and effect, from the passing thereof, until the first day of January which will be in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six."

It will be noted that this "law" created in two counties, and not elsewhere, about a score of new felonies punishable with death by hanging, without benefit of clergy, a fate reserved for only the most atrocious malefactors; that among these felonies the burning of a wisp of hay, and the aiding or harboring of one who had burned a wisp of hay, was included; and that the offenders were to be caught and hanged without any form of trial. It is hard to conceive that this was a deliberate act of a royal governor, council, and assembly, and not the decree of banditti to extort plunder. But it was a mistake thus to sell the lion's hide while he yet roamed the wilderness. The royal beast shook his mane and showed teeth and claws after this wise:

PROTEST OF THE GREEN MOUNTAIN BOYS.

"His Excellency, Governor Tryon, in conformity to the addresses of the general assembly of the colony of New York, having, on the 9th day of March, 1774, with the advice of his Council, issued his proclamation, offering therein large sums of money for the purpose of apprehending and imprisoning the following persons, viz., Ethan Allen, Seth Warner, Remember Baker, Robert Cochran, Peleg Sunderland, Silvanus Brown, James Breakenridge, and James Smith.

"And whereas his Excellency the Governor, by the same proclamation, hath strictly enjoined and commanded all magistrates, justices of the peace, sheriffs and other civil officers of the counties of Albany and Charlotte, to be active and vigilant in apprehending and imprisoning the persons above named; and we, the aforesaid persons, who have hereunto subscribed, being conscious that our cause is good and equitable in the sight of GOD, and all unprejudiced and honest men, are determined at all events to maintain and defend the same, till his Majesty's pleasure shall be known concerning the validity of the New Hampshire Grants,—And we now proclaim to the public, not only for ourselves but for the New Hampshire grantees, and occu-

pants in general, that the spring and moving cause of our opposition to the government of New York was self-preservation, viz., Firstly, the preservation and maintaining of our property; and secondly, since that government is so incensed against us, therefore it stands us in hand to defend our lives; for it appears by a late set of laws passed by the legislature thereof, that the lives and property of the New Hampshire settlers are manifestly struck at; but that the public may rightly understand the essence of the controversy, we now proclaim to those lawgivers and to the world, that if the New York patentees will remove their patents that have been subsequently lapped and laid on the New Hampshire charters, and quiet us in our possessions, agreeable to his Majesty's directions, and suspend those criminal prosecutions against us for being rioters (as we are unjustly denominated) then will our settlers be orderly and submissive subjects to government; but be it known to that despotic fraternity of law-makers and law-breakers, that we will not be fooled or frightened out of our property. They have broke over his Majesty's express prohibitions in patenting those lands, and when they act in conformity to the regal authority of Great Britian, it will be soon enough for us to obey them. It is well known by all wise and sensible persons in the neighboring governments (that have animadverted on the controversy) that their pretended zeal for good order and government is fallacious, and that they aim at the lands and labours of the grantees and settlers aforesaid; and that they subvert the good and wholesome laws of the realm, to corroborate with and bring about their vile and mercenary purposes.

"And, inasmuch as the malignity of their disposition toward us hath inflamed to an immeasurable and murderous degree, they have, in their new-fangled laws, calculated for the meridian of the New Hampshire grants, passed the 9th of March, 1774, so calculated them as to correspond with the depravedness of their minds and morals;—in these laws they have exhibited their genuine pictures. The emblems of their insatiable, avaricious, over-bearing, inhuman, barbarous and blood-guiltiness of disposition and intention is therein portraited in that transparent image of themselves, which cannot fail to be a blot and an infamous reproach to them, to posterity.—We cannot suppose that every of his Majesty's council, or that all the members of the general assembly, were active in passing so bloody and unconstitutional a set of laws. Undoubtedly some of them disapproved thereof; and it is altogether possible, that many that were active in making the law were imposed upon by false repre-

sentations, and acted under mistaken views of doing honor to government; but be this as it will, it appears that there was a majority. And it has been too much the case with that government for a number of designing schemers and land-jockeys to rule the same. Let us take a view of their former narrow and circumscribed boundaries, and how that by legerdemain, bribery and deception of one sort or other, they have extended their domain far and wide. They have wrangled with and encroached on their neighboring governments, and have used all manner of deceit and fraud to accomplish their design. Their tenants groan under their usury and oppression; and they have gained as well as merited the disapprobation and abhorrence of their neighbors; and the innocent blood they have already shed calls for heaven's vengeance on their guilty heads; and if they should come forth in arms against us, thousands of their injured and dissatisfied neighbors in the several governments will join with us, to cut off and extirpate such an execrable race from the face of the earth!

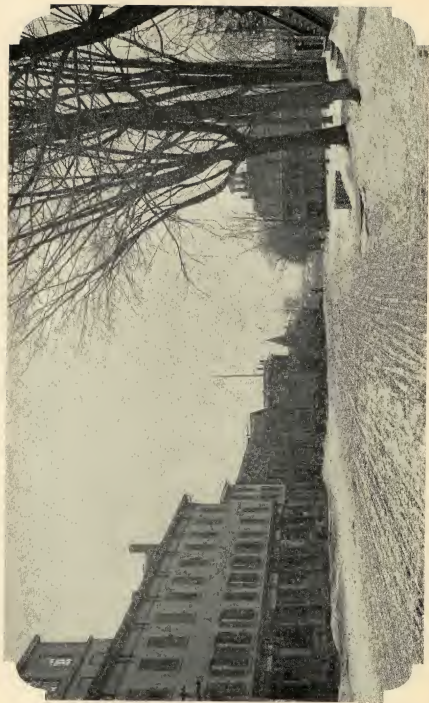
"This piece is not supposed to contain a full answer to the new constructed laws aforesaid; for such a large *two year old* hath never before been seen in America, it being of an enormous and monstrous birth; nor is it supposed to give the legislators their full characters; but so much may suffice for the present. To quote the laws, and make remarks thereon, would be matter sufficient for a volume; however, we will yet make some short observations.

"1st. Negatively, it is a not a law for the Province of New York in general, but,

"2d. Positively, it is a law but for part of the counties of Charlotte and Albany, viz., such parts thereof as are covered with the New Hampshire charters; and it is well known those grants compose but a minor part of the inhabitants of the said Province; and we have no representative in that assembly. The first knowledge we had of said laws, was the completion of them; which informed us, that if we assembled, three or more of us together, to oppose (that which they call legal) authority, we shall be adjudged FELONS and suffer the pains of DEATH; and that same fraternity of plotters know, as well as we, and the generality of the people in the adjacent colonies, that they have, for a number of years last past, endeavored to exercise such a course of what they call law, that had they not been opposed by the people of these grants (called the MOB) in the executing the same, they would before this time have been in possession of that territory for which the laws aforesaid are

Scene near Vergennes.





In Vergennes.

calculated. Therefore the case stands thus: If we oppose civil officers in taking possession of our farms, we are by these laws denominated FELONS; or if we defend our neighbors, who have been indicted rioters only for defending our property, we are likewise adjudged FELONS. In fine, every opposition to their monarchical government is deemed felony, and at the end of every such sentence, there is the word DEATH! And the same laws further empowered the respective judges, provided any persons to the number of three or more that shall oppose any magistrate, or other civil officer, and be not taken; that after a legal warning of seventy days, if they do not come and yield themselves up to certain officers appointed for the purpose of securing them, then it shall be lawful for the judges aforesaid to award execution of DEATH, the same as though he or they had been convicted or attainted before a proper court of judicature. The candid reader will doubtless observe that the diabolical design of this law is to obtain possession of the New Hampshire Grants, or to make the people that defend them outlaws, and so kill them whenever they can catch them.

“Those bloody law-givers know we are necessitated to oppose their execution of law, where it points directly at our property, or give up the same: but there is one thing is matter of consolation to us, viz., that printed sentences of death will not kill us when we are at a distance; and if the executioners approach us, they will be as likely to fall victims to death as we; and that person or country of persons are cowards indeed, if they cannot as manfully fight for their liberty, property and life, as villains can do to deprive them thereof.

“The New York schemers accuse us with many things, part of which are true and part not. With respect to rescuing prisoners for debt, it is *false*. As to assuming judicial powers, we have not, except a well-regulated combination of the people to defend their just rights may be called so. As to forming ourselves into military order and assuming military commands, the New York posses and military preparations and oppressions obliged us to it. Probably Messieurs Duane, Kempe and Banyar of New York will not discommend us for so expedient a preparation; more especially since the decrees of the 9th of March are yet to be put in execution. And we flatter ourselves, upon occasion, we can muster as good a regiment of marksmen and scalpers as America can afford. And we now give the gentlemen above named, together with Mr. Brush and Col. Ten Broeck, and in fine all the land jobbers of New York,

an invitation to come and view the dexterity of our regiment. And we cannot think of a better time for that purpose than when the executioners come to kill us, by virtue of the authority their judges have lately received to award and sentence us to death in our absence. There is still one more notable complaint against us, viz., That we have insulted and menaced several magistrates and other civil officers, so that they dare not execute their respective functions. This is true so far as it relates to magistrates. But the public should be informed what the functions of those magistrates are. They are commissioned for the sole purpose of doing us all the harm and mischief they possibly can through their administration and influence, and that they might be subservient to the wicked designs of the New York schemers. These are their functions; and the public need no further proof than the consideration that they are the tools of those extravagant law-makers. It must be owned they acted with great judgment in choosing the most infernal instruments for their purpose.

"Draco, the Athenian law-giver, caused a number of laws (in many respects analogous to those we have been speaking of) to be written in blood. But our modern Dracos determined to have theirs *verified* in blood. They well know we shall, more than THREE, nay, more than THREE TIMES THREE HUNDRED, assemble together if need be, to maintain our common cause till his Majesty determines who shall be and remain the owners of the land in contest. 'Wilt thou possess that which Chemoth, thy god, giveth thee to possess? So will we possess that which the Lord our God and King giveth us to possess.

"And lastly, we address ourselves to the people of the counties of Albany and Charlotte, which inhabit to the westward of, and are situated contiguous to, the New Hampshire Grants.

"Gentlemen, Friends and Neighbors: Providence having allotted and fixed the bonds of our habitations in the same vicinity, which together with the intercourse of trade and commerce hath formed an almost universal acquaintance and tie of friendship between us, and hath laid such a foundation of knowledge that your people in general cannot but be sensible that the title of our land is in reality the bone of contention, and that as a people we behave ourselves orderly, and are industrious and honestly disposed, and pay just deference to order and good government; and that we mean no more by that which is called the *mob* but to defend our just rights and properties. We appeal to the gentlemen merchants

to inform whether our people in general do not exert themselves to pay their just debts, and whether ever they have been hindered by the county's MOB, in the collection of their dues. But as to the magistrates, sheriffs, under-sheriffs, coroners and constables, of the respective counties, that hold their posts of honor and profit under our bitter enemies, we have a jealousy that some of them may be induced (to recommend themselves to those on whom they are dependant, and for the wages of unrighteousness, offered by proclamation) to presume to apprehend some of us, or our friends. We therefore advertise such officers, and all persons whatsoever, that we are resolved to inflict *immediate death* on whomsoever may attempt the same. And provided any of us or our party shall be taken, and we have not notice sufficient to relieve them, or whether we relieve them or not, we are resolved to surround such person or persons, whether at his or their own house or houses, or anywhere that we can find him or them, and *shoot such person or persons dead*. And furthermore, that we will *kill* and *destroy* any person or persons whomsoever, that shall *presume* to be accessory, aiding or assisting in taking any of us as aforesaid; for by these presents we give any such disposed person or persons to understand, that although they have a license by the law aforesaid to *kill* us, and an indemnification for such murder from the same authority, yet they have no indemnification for so doing from the Green Mountain Boys; for our lives, liberties and properties are as verily precious to us as to any of the King's subjects, and we are as loyal to his Majesty or his government, as any subjects in the Province; but if the govermental authority of New York will judge in their own case, and act in opposition to that of Great Britain, and insist upon killing us, to take possession of our vineyards—come on, we are ready for a game of scalping with them, for our martial spirits glow with bitter indignation and consummate fury, to blast their infernal projections.

"It may be, the reader not having seen the law referred to in this piece, and not being thoroughly acquainted with the long and spirited conflict that hath subsisted between the claimants under New Hampshire and New York, nor of the progressive, arbitrary and monopolizing disposition of the court party of the latter of those Provinces, may be apt to imagine that the spirit of this writing is too severe, inasmuch as it destines whoever presumes to take us as felons or rioters, to immediate death; but let the wise consider the state of the cause.

"1. Provided we on our part be taken, we have, by these laws,

the sentence of death already pronounced against us, on proviso more than three of us assemble together to maintain and defend our property, till his Majesty determines the controversy. And,

"2. May it be considered, that the legislative authority of the Province of New York had no constitutional right or power to make such laws; and consequently that they are null and void, from the nature and energy of the English constitution; therefore, as they merit no place among the laws of the realm of Great Britain, but are the arbitrary league and combination of our bitter and merciless enemies, who to obtain our property, have inhumanly, barbarously and maliciously, under the specious and hypocritical pretence of legal authority and veneration for order and government, laid a snare for our lives in so critical a situation. For by the laws of the Province into which we have unfortunately fallen, we cannot be protected in either property or life, except we give up the former to secure the latter; so we are resolved to maintain both, or to hazard or lose both.

"From hence follows a necessary inference, That inasmuch as our property, nay, our lives, cannot be protected (but manifestly struck at) by the highest authority in the Province to which we at present belong; therefore in the interim, while his Majesty is determining the controversy, and till he shall interpose his royal authority, and subject the authority aforesaid to their duty, or re annex the district of disputed lands to the Province of New Hampshire, or some way in his great wisdom and fatherly clemency put the distressed settlers under New Hampshire on an equal footing with our brother subjects in his realm; we are under necessity of resisting, even unto blood, every person who may attempt to take us as felons or rioters as aforesaid; for in this it is not resisting law, but only opposing force by force; therefore, inasmuch as by the oppressions aforesaid the New Hampshire settlers are reduced to the disagreeable state of anarchy and confusion, in which state we hope for wisdom, patience and fortitude, till the happy hour his Majesty shall graciously be pleased to restore us to the privileges of Englishmen.

Signed by:	ETHAN ALLEN	PELEG SUNDERLAND
	SETH WARNER	JOHN SMITH
	REMEMBER BAKER	SILVANUS BROWN
	ROBERT COCHRAN	

"Bennington, April 26, 1774."

This remonstrance was published and widely circulated. The same year (1774), Ethan Allen wrote, published and circulated a

pamphlet of over two hundred pages, entitled "A Brief Narrative of the Proceedings of the Government of New York Relative to their Obtaining the Jurisdiction of that District of Land to the Westward of Connecticut River," in which the situation was fully reviewed in a very able, if not a very polished, manner.

This Benjamin Hough, on whose petition the "Bloody Edict" was procured, soon experienced some of the effects of it. He described himself as an "anabaptist preacher of the gospel," and had, during his residence in Socialborough, been an open and troublesome advocate of that odious patent, though he claimed to have also bargained for the New Hampshire title. He spent the winter of 1773-4 in New York advocating the passage of the Act of Infamy, and came home with a York commission as justice of the peace, dated March 12, three days after the passage of that barbarous measure. He was loud in his denunciation of rioters, and active in the exercise of his office. He was served with a copy of the resolution of the convention held at Manchester, April 12 and 13, 1774, by which it was declared that whoever should, "until his Majesty's pleasure in the premises should be further known," presume to take a commission of the peace from the New York government, should "be deemed an enemy to their country and the common cause." He was also verbally warned and threatened, but paid no heed. The indignation of the people who had been practically outlawed and held up as objects of protected murder on his petition was naturally great. And it was finally decided that he should feel the lion's claws. He was seized by a body of his neighbors and carried about thirty miles to Sunderland, kept three days under guard until the leading Green Mountain Boys were assembled, when he was brought to trial on the 30th of January, 1775, before a court consisting of Ethan Allen, Seth Warner, Robert Cochran, Peleg Sunderland, James Mead, Gideon Warren and Jesse Warner. The facts were undisputed, and his defense that he was acting under the lawful authority of New York, was pronounced inadmissible by the court, who proceeded to pronounce the following sentence, viz., "That the prisoner be taken from the bar of this Committee of Safety and be tied to a tree, and there, on his naked back, receive two hundred stripes; his back being dressed, he shall depart out of the district, and on return, without special leave of the convention, shall suffer death." This sentence of whipping was forthwith carried into execution with unsparing severity, in the presence of a large concourse of people. This was probably the last, as it doubtless was the



In Lincoln.

severest, punishment ever inflicted by the Green Mountain Boys, and with almost poetic justice it fell upon the back of the one who most richly deserved it. Hough asked and received the following certificate signed by Allen and Warner:

“Sunderland, 30th of Jan., 1775.

“This may certify the inhabitants of the New Hampshire Grants, that Benjamin Hough hath this day received a full punishment for his crimes committed heretofore against this country, and our inhabitants are ordered to give him, the said Hough, a free and unmolested passport toward the city of New York, or to the westward of our Grants, he behaving himself as becometh. Given under our hands the day and date aforesaid,

ETHAN ALLEN
SETH WARNER.”

Ethan Allen, on delivering this paper to Hough, thoughtfully observed to that unhappy magistrate that this certificate, *together with the receipt on his back*, would no doubt be admitted as legal evidence before the supreme court and the governor and council of New York, though the King's warrant to Gov. Wentworth and his Excellency's sign manual with the Great Seal of the Province of New Hampshire would not.

Hough departed the next day for New York, where he made an affidavit before Chief Justice Horsemanden, detailing the outrages inflicted upon him, and he petitioned the council for protection against the rioters. The council, after due deliberation, declared they were powerless to furnish such protection; but on his subsequent representation, in connection with one Daniel Walker, Jr., that they had been “expelled from their habitations by the Bennington rioters, and were destitute of the means of support and had been involving themselves in debt for the necessities of life,” it was ordered “that a brief be issued in favor of the petitioners,” by which they were allowed to solicit contributions from the public. This illustrates the unbounding generosity of these rich and powerful New York land claimants, among whom were the lieutenant governor, then chief magistrate of the colony, several members of his council and other prominent government officers, toward the chief martyr to their cause. They gave him license to beg in the public streets.

Another slightly earlier and less serious punishment was that inflicted upon Dr. Samuel Adams of Arlington. He held lands under

the New Hampshire title, and up to the close of 1773 had been of the New Hampshire party. But after the promulgation of the Bloody Edict, he began to weaken, to talk in favor of the New York title and to advise his neighbors to buy it. This open desertion was ill brooked by the now thoroughly roused, alert and indignant Green Mountain Boys. Paying no heed to their warnings, he was arrested and taken before the committee of safety at the Catamount Tavern in Bennington. There, after being heard in his own defense, he was sentenced "to be tied in arm chair and hoisted up to the sign [a catamount's skin stuffed, sitting upon the sign-post 25 feet from the ground, looking and grinning toward New York], and there to hang two hours, as a punishment merited by his enmity to the rights and liberty of the New Hampshire Grants." The sentence was executed to the no small merriment of a large concourse of people. The doctor was then let down and dismissed by the committee, with an admonition to go and sin no more.

"This mild and exemplary disgrace," says Ira Allen in his history, "had a salutary effect on the doctor and many others."

"Notwithstanding the large rewards offered for Allen and his associates, they do not appear to have been in any real danger of being apprehended under the governor's proclamation. The terror which their threats, backed as they were by the known power and determination of the Green Mountain Boys, produced among their adversaries, and the general sympathy felt for them by the people of the province, were sufficient to prevent any serious attempt to capture them. Further protection against invasion of the territory by the Yorkers was, however, provided by the erection of two forts near the outskirts of the settlements; one at New Haven falls, on Otter Creek, in the neighborhood of Col. Reid's patent (Vergennes), and the other on Onion run, at Colchester (Winooski). Information of the erection of these fortresses and of the continued hostility of the settlers being laid before the New York council, that body on the 1st of September, 1774, advised Lieut.-Gov. Colden to apply to Gen. Gage, then military commander-in-chief, for the aid of regular troops. With this application Gen. Gage declined to comply, on the ground that a similar application had been previously denied by the British ministry, and also for the reason that Gov. Tryon had been called home to give light on the points in dispute concerning the New Hampshire lands, upon which a final decision might soon be expected. An appeal from this decision of Gen. Gage having been made by Lieut.-Gov. Colden to the English ministry, Lord

Dartmouth, with strong assurances of regard for the loyal conduct of the New York government, informed him that he did not 'at present see sufficient ground for the adoption of such a measure.' Thus ended the third and last abortive effort of the New York land claimants to have their titles enforced by the aid of the king's regular troops."—*Hall's Early History*.

CHAPTER VII.

EARLY GROWTH OF EASTERN VERMONT.

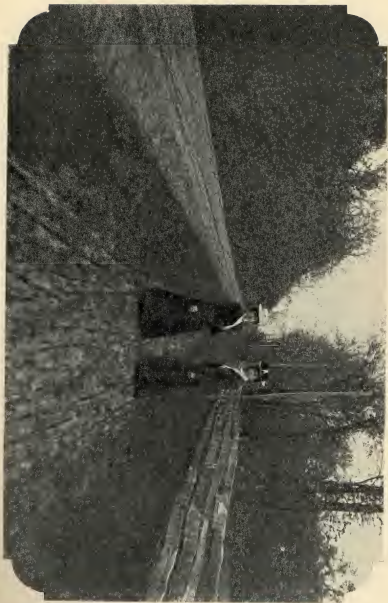
"Her broad vans seek unplanted lands."

—*Emerson.*

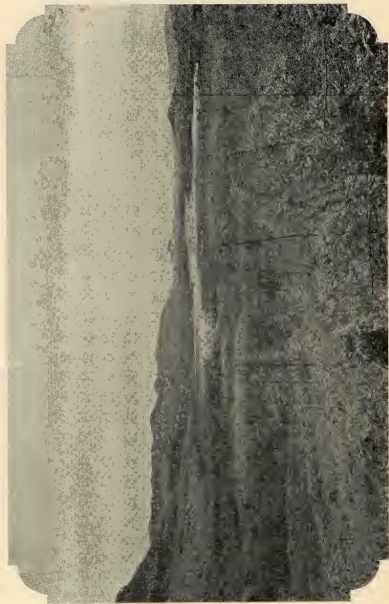
ALTHOUGH, by reason of the New York controversy, the more dramatic interest of early Vermont history centers about the western border, the earliest settlement was in the south-eastern part. This was at Fort Dummer (now Brattleboro) on the Connecticut River. This fort was erected by the Massachusetts colony, but was afterwards decided to be within the limits of that part of New Hampshire which afterward became Vermont. This was the first civilized establishment made within the present limits of our state, followed next, as we have seen, by the French settlement on Lake Champlain, in 1731, at Chimney Point, which they called Point a la Chevalure, opposite their Fort St. Frederic.

As we have seen also the provinces of Massachusetts and New Hampshire had a long controversy respecting their dividing line. This was not settled until March 5, 1740, when George the Second decided "that the northern boundary of the province of Massachusetts be a similar curve line, pursuing the course of the Merrimack River, at three miles distance on the north side thereof, beginning at the Atlantic Ocean and ending at a point due north of Patucket Falls; and a straight line drawn from thence due west, until it meets with his Majesty's other governments." This line was run in 1741, and has ever since been held to be the boundary line between Massachusetts on the south and Vermont and New Hampshire on the north. By this decision and the establishment of this line (among other considerations) the New Hampshire colony claimed jurisdiction as far west as Massachusetts extended; that is, within twenty miles of Hudson river. Fort Dummer, on the west side of the Connecticut, fell north of this line; and the king repeatedly recommended to the assembly of New Hampshire to provide for the support of that frontier station, as it was out of the jurisdiction of Massachusetts, and New York took no notice of it.

Prior to the establishment of Fort Dummer the whole territory



View, Weybridge.



Lake Dunmore.

of Vermont, from time immemorial, had been in possession of the native Indians. Still, never after the discovery by Champlain would there seem to have been any permanent occupation by Indians. "Although the Indians who accompanied Champlain on his inland voyage of discovery told him that the country on the east side of the Lake was inhabited by the Iroquois, there is no evidence that it was permanently occupied by them then, if it ever had been. There are traces of a more than transient residence of some tribe here at some time, but their identity and the date of their occupancy can only be conjectured. The relics found give no clue by which to determine whether they who fashioned here their rude pottery and implements and weapons of stone were Iroquois or Waubanakee (called Abenaki by the French and meaning the White Land), nor when these beautiful valleys were their home.

"A fact affording some proof that the Iroquois abandoned it very long ago, is that not one stream, lake, mountain, or other landmark within the limits of Vermont, now bears an Iroquois name. Of all the Indian names that have been preserved, every one is Waubanakee; and though many of them are euphonious, and those least so far better than our commonplace and vulgar nomenclature, none of them have the poetic significance of those so frequently bestowed by the Iroquois on mountain, lake, rock and river.

"It does not seem probable that the warlike nation that conquered all tribes with which it came in contact, having once gained complete possession, should relinquish it. A more reasonable conclusion is, that the country lying east of Lake Champlain was a debatable ground of these aboriginal tribes in the remote past, as it was more recently of civilized nations and states."—*Vermont, by Rowland Robinson.*

In the vote passed by the General Court of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, establishing Fort Dummer, it was recited that "it will be of great service to all the western frontiers, both in this and in the neighboring governments of Connecticut, to build a block-house above Northfield, in the most convenient place on the lands called the equivalent lands, and to post in it forty able men, English and western Indians, to be employed in scouting at a good distance up the Connecticut River, West River, Otter Creek, and sometimes eastwardly above Great Monadnock, for the discovery of the enemy coming toward any of the frontier towns, and that so much of the said equivalent lands as shall be necessary for a block-house be taken up, with the consent of the owners of the said land, together

with five or six acres of their interval land, to be broken up or plowed for the present use of the western Indians, in case any of them shall think fit to bring their families hither."

The site was chosen in the southeastern part of the present town of Brattleboro, and in February, 1724, the work was begun by a force of "four carpenters, twelve soldiers with narrow axes, and two teams," under Col. John Stoddard of Northampton. In the early summer it was ready for occupancy, and was named Fort Dummer, in honor of the lieutenant-governor of Massachusetts. The fort was built of hewn logs laid horizontally in a square whose sides were 180 feet in length, and outside this was a stockade of square timbers, twelve feet in length, set upright in the ground. Within the inner inclosure, built against the walls, were the "province houses," the habitation of the garrison and other inmates, and themselves capable of stout defense should its assailants gain entrance to the fort. Beside the small arms of the garrison, Fort Dummer was furnished with four light swivel guns, and also a great gun used only as a signal. On the 11th of October following its completion, the fort was attacked by seventy hostile Indians, and four or five of its occupants killed or wounded. Scouting parties (says Mr. Robinson) frequently went out to watch for the enemy, sometimes up the Connecticut to the Great Falls, sometimes up West River, and thence across the Wilderness to the same point. Sometimes they were sent to the mountains at West River and the Great Falls, "to lodge on ye top," and from these lofty watch-towers the keen eyes of the rangers scanned the mapped expanse of forest when it was green with summer leafage, gorgeous with autumn hues, or gray with the snows of winter and the ramage of naked branches, "viewing for smoaks" of hostile camp-fires. In July, 1775, Captain Wright, with a volunteer force of sixty men, scouted up the Connecticut to Wells River, and some distance up that stream, thence to the Winooski, which they followed till they came within sight of Lake Champlain, when, having penetrated the heart of the Wilderness farther than any English force had previously done, the scantiness of their provisions compelled their return.

By the authority of the General Court of Massachusetts, a "truck-house," or trading house, was established at Fort Dummer in 1728, and the Indians finding that they could make better bargains here than at the French trading-posts, flocked hither with their peltry, moose-skins and tallow. When, seventeen years after the erection of Fort Dummer, the boundary line was run between

Massachusetts and New Hampshire, and the fort fell in the latter state, the New Hampshire government was appealed to by Massachusetts to maintain it, but New Hampshire declined on the ground that her own frontier was better protected by the stronger fort at Number Four (Charlestown); also that it was more the interest of Massachusetts than of New Hampshire to continue its support. Governor Wentworth urged upon a new Assembly the safer and more generous policy, but to no purpose, and such maintenance as Fort Dummer continued to receive was furnished by Massachusetts.

Number Four, on the east side of the Connecticut at the present site of Charlestown, a short distance above Bellows Falls, and below the mouth of the Black River, was first settled in 1740. In 1743 a fort was there builded under the direction of the same Colonel Stoddard who had built Fort Dummer. It was similar to that fortification in size and construction, but was stockaded only on the north side. It enclosed as "province houses" the dwellings previously built by five of the settlers and one built at the same time with the fort. The settlers continued here for three years thereafter, during which they suffered frequent assaults from marauding bands of Indians, in one of which eight of the soldiers and inhabitants were killed and three taken prisoners. When the Massachusetts troops which for a while had garrisoned the place were withdrawn, the helpless people abandoned their newly made homes, and for months the deserted fort remained silent and desolate. Being urged to do so, Governor Shirley ordered Capt. Phineas Stevens with thirty men to march to and occupy the fort at Number Four. Arriving there on the 27th of March, 1747, Captain Stevens found the place in good condition, but garrisoned only by a shadowy dog and cat, left there at the evacuation the fall before, by whom the new comers were given a hearty welcome. The new garrison had been in possession but a few days when they were attacked by a band of French and Indians commanded by Monsieur Debeline, who opened a musketry fire upon the fort on all sides. Failing to take it in this way, they attempted to burn it by setting fire to the fences and houses near it, by shooting flaming arrows upon the roof, and then by pushing a cart loaded with burning brush against the walls. Captain Stevens thus describes the device by which he prevented the firing of the wooden walls: "Those who were not employed in firing at the enemy were employed in digging trenches under the bottom of the fort. We dug no less than eleven of them so deep that a man could go and stand upright on the outside and

not endanger himself; so that when these trenches were finished we could wet all the outside of the fort, which we did, and kept it wet all night. We drew some hundreds of barrels of water, and to undergo all this hard service there was but thirty men." The enemy (said to have numbered 400) were baffled at all points, and their dire threats and fair promises were alike set at naught by the brave defenders. On the third day of the siege Debeline offered to withdraw if Stevens would sell them provisions. Stevens refused, but offered to give them five bushels of corn for ever hostage that should be given him, to be held till an English captive could be brought from Canada; whereupon the the besiegers, not relishing these terms, after firing a few more shots, withdrew to Fort St. Frederic. Stevens's loss was but two wounded, while that of the enemy must have been considerable. Captain Stevens's bravery and soldier-like qualities were so much admired by Sir Charles Knowles, an officer of high rank in the British navy, that he presented the Captain with a handsome sword, and in honor of the donor the township was named Charlestown.

"No expeditions were afterwards undertaken by the French while this war lasted, but the Indians in small parties continued to harry the settlements till after its close in 1748. To guard against these incursions, scouting parties led by brave and experienced partisans frequently went out from the frontier forts to watch the motions of the enemy, when oftentimes their perilous adventures and heroic deeds read more like a tale from old romance than a page of history. One memorable incident of this service took place on Vermont soil, about twelve miles northwest of Fort Dummer, on Sunday, June 26, 1748, when Capt. Humphrey Hobbs, Stevens's second in command in the gallant defense of Number Four, being on a scout with forty men, for four hours held at bay and finally beat off an Indian force of more than four times that number. It was a brush fight, wherein the scouts had no shelter but such forest cover as also sheltered their assailants. But three of the scouts were killed; the loss of the Indians, though great, was never known, as when one fell his nearest comrade crept to the body and attached a line to it by which it was drawn to cover. During the fight the scouts frequently beheld the ghastly sight of a dead Indian gliding away and fading from view in the undergrowth, as if drawn thither by some superhuman power."—*Robinson*.

"At this time (1748) Number Four was the most northerly of the English posts, but they had erected several small forts on the



View Near Bristol.



In Bristol.

west side of the river in the vicinity of Fort Dummer. Among these were Bridgman's and Startwell's fort in Vernon. Bridgman's fort was attacked on the 24th of June, 1746, by a party of Indians, who killed two of the settlers, wounded one and took several prisoners, but were finally repulsed. They, however, succeeded the next year in taking and destroying this fort, killing several of the inhabitants and carrying a number of others into captivity. The fort was rebuilt, but in July, 1755, a party of Indians lurking near the fort waylaid three settlers as they were returning from their work and killed one, Caleb Howe. Another was drowned in attempting to cross the river, and one escaped. The Indians gained entrance to the fort, whose only inmates were the wives and children of these three men, by making the customary signal, which they had learned by observation. After plundering the fort and taking the helpless inmates captives, they proceeded through the Wilderness to Crown Point and thence to Canada. Their prisoners suffered there a long captivity, but were at length mostly redeemed."—*Dwight's Travels*.

As early as 1752 it was proposed by the English to lay out two townships and commence a settlement at Coos on the Connecticut River, where Haverhill in New Hampshire and Newbury in this state now lie. Pursuant to this plan the governor of New Hampshire in the spring of 1752 ordered out a party to explore the country, survey the townships and erect stockades capable of lodging 200 men each. The object was partly to get possession of the rich meadows at Coos and partly to form a barrier against the St. Francis Indians in case of war; but the firm remonstrance of that tribe caused the undertaking to be at once given up, so much was their resentment dreaded at that early period.

"By 1754 settlements had been commenced on the Vermont side as far up the Connecticut as Westminster and Rockingham. But in that year their advancement was stopped by the breaking out of the French war, which continued until the final conquest of Canada in 1760. During this war these feeble settlements were continually harrassed by the French and Indians. The inhabitants could not cultivate their fields without being exposed to the bullet of a lurking foe. Their block-houses were frequently surprised and taken and the inhabitants either murdered or carried into captivity. These barbarities were perpetrated, under the guidance of the French, mostly by the Indians of St. Francis, who for fifty years had been the most active and relentless foes of the New England colonies. Early in the century many members of the different tribes of Wau-

banakees in the eastern part of New England had been induced by the governor of Canada to remove to that province, and since then had lived on the St. Francis river, and were commonly known as the St. Francis tribe, though they gave themselves the name of 'Zooquagese,' the people who withdrew from the others, or literally 'the Little People.' Their intimate acquaintance with the region which had been the home of their people, and their familiarity with every waterway and mountain pass that gave easiest access to the English frontiers, made them as valuable instruments as their hatred of the English made them willing ones, for the hostile purposes of the French. Their atrocities continued until Major Rogers, at gray of dawn on the 5th of October, 1759, burst into their sleeping village at Three Rivers, with his two hundred rangers, and literally wiped the tribe off the face of the earth, as already related.

"Different routes were taken by the predatory bands in their descents upon the frontiers of New England. One was by the St. Francis River and Lake Memphremagog, thence to the Passumpsic and down that river to the Connecticut, that gave an easy route to the settlements. Another was up the Winooski and down White River to the Connecticut. Another left Lake Champlain at the mouth of Great Otter Creek; then up its slow lower reaches to where it becomes a swift mountain stream, when the trail led to West River, or Wantasticook, emptying into the Connecticut. And still another way to West River and the Connecticut was from the head of the lake up the Pawlet river. Of these routes, that by the Winooski was so frequently taken that the English named the stream the French River; while that of which Otter Creek was a part, being the easiest and nearest to Crown Point, was perhaps the oftenest used, and was commonly known as the 'Indian Road.'

"All these familiar war paths to every Waubanakee warrior, with every stream and landmark bearing names his fathers had given them, led through Vermont, then only known to English-speaking men as 'The Wilderness.'"—*Robinson*.

As one of the most deadly of these awful visits, Mr. Robinson cites that against Deerfield, in the winter of 1702-3, as follow:

"A force of three hundred French and Indians commanded by Hertel De Rouville, a skilled partisan leader, as had been his father, was dispatched by Vaudreuil, governor of Canada, against Deerfield, then the northernmost settlement on the Connecticut. It was February, and Champlain was frozen throughout its length. Along it they marched as far as the mouth of the Winooski, and took this their

accustomed path through the heart of the Wilderness toward the Connecticut. Marching above the unseen and unheard flow of the river, over whose wintry silence bent the snow-laden branches of the graceful birch, the dark hemlock and the fir, or along the hidden trail, an even whiteness except to the trained instinct of the Indian, seldom a sound came to them out of the forest save the echo of their own footsteps and voices. Sometimes they heard the resonant crack of trees under stress of frost, or the breaking of an over-laden bough, the whir of startled grouse, the sudden retreat of a deer, or a giant moose tearing through the undergrowth; and sometimes they heard the stealthy tread of their brothers, the wolves, sneaking from some point of observation near their path; but in this remoteness of human haunts, and this deadness of winter, never a sound to alarm men so accustomed to all strange woodland noises. Then they came to the broad Connecticut, an open road to lead them to their victims, upon whom they fell in the early morning when the guards were asleep. Winter, the frequent ally of the Canadian bands, aided them now with snow drifts heaped to the top of the low ramparts about the garrison houses, and upon them the assailants made entrance. All the inhabitants were slain or captured, the village plundered and set on fire, and an hour after sunrise the victorious party was on its way to Canada with its booty and wretched captives."

It thus appears that, long before the axe of the first settler had been heard in the Wilderness that was Vermont to be, the savage had his highways through all her forests and along all her streams; and that the venturesome pioneer who attacked the woodlands and built himself a home on the banks of the broad Connecticut, before any had yet dared the shores of the Gate of the Country, was yet equally in peril, for he had seated himself upon one of the principal warpaths of the Indian. And in fact, as these eastern pioneers were the first of the settlers on the Grants to fall under the tomahawk, so they were the last to hear the dread war-whoop and see their homes given to the flames, when Royalton was burned in the fall of 1780.

Doubtless at the beginning of the Revolution quite a majority of the inhabitants of the Grants (Vermont) were on the east side of the Green Mountains. In the earliest history of Vermont, by Samuel Williams, LL.D., completed and published in 1794, it is stated that, at the time when Tryon had the people of his province of New York numbered in 1772, he included the counties of Cumberland

and Gloucester, which covered the tract that was in 1794 composed of the counties of Windham, Orange and Windsor; and that he found therein people to the number of 3,947. "These two counties," says Dr. Williams, "at that time contained about two-thirds of the people in the whole district. The whole number of inhabitants therefore in 1771 must have been about 7,000."

In the questions proposed by the Committee of Congress to the Agents on the Part of Vermont, with the answers of the Agents, August 18, 1781, are the following:

"Question. What are the number of inhabitants within the lines mentioned in the propositions above mentioned?

"Answer. As the citizens of Vermont have not lately been numbered, we can therefore only estimate them at 30,000, which we conceive to be a nearly true estimate."

The first census was taken in 1792, and gives the total number of inhabitants in the state at 85,539. These were then distributed nearly equally on the two sides of the mountains, there being on the east side 43,970, and on the west side 41,569.

